

## Minutes of the Veneta City Council

December 8, 2008

Present: Mayor T. J. Brooker, Thomas Cotter, Darrell Carman, Sharon Hobart-Hardin and Marion Esty

Others: Ric Ingham, City Administrator; Jerri Moore, Finance Director; Brian Issa, Community Services Director; Darci Henneman, Assistant City Recorder; Dunny Sorenson, and Thomas Laing

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Mayor Brooker called the Veneta City Council to order at 7:00 p.m.

### 1. PUBLIC COMMENT

### 2. CONSENT AGENDA

**MOTION:** Sharon Hobart-Hardin made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Thomas Cotter seconded the motion.

In response to a question from Thomas Cotter, Jerri Moore said the City-wide leaf pick-up was the reason for higher than normal disposal costs.

**Vote:** Thomas Cotter, aye; Marion Esty, aye; Mayor Brooker, aye; Darrell Carman, aye; and Sharon Hobart-Hardin, aye.

The consent agenda as approved included Minutes for November 24, 2008, Bills Paid for November 2008 and the Public Works Activity Report for November, 2008.

### 3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

#### a. FROM MAYOR/COUNCILORS

Mr. Dunny Sorenson of City County Insurance presented a silver award to the City of Veneta for 94% of City staff participating in the "Healthy Benefits" wellness Program.

In response to a question from Sharon Hobart-Hardin, Mr. Sorenson said approximately 25% of his clients received the Wellness Award.

#### **Tom Laing, 88120 Ruby Jean, Veneta, OR**

Mr. Laing, Vice Chairman of the Lane County Veterans for Foreign Wars (VFW) spoke on behalf of the VFW. Mr. Laing has been a Veneta resident for over 32 years and is a veteran of the Vietnam War and a past Commander of the Marine Corp. Mr. Laing would like to build a Veteran's Memorial in Veneta. He presented a conceptual drawing of the Memorial to be located near the flag pole in the West Lane Shopping Center. He said it will be a Veterans' Memorial to honor all veterans and would not be a memorial for a particular war. He felt it would get a lot of positive response from the community. Mr. Laing said he, Ric and Kyle Schauer met with Aaron Ketch from ODOT. He said ODOT currently owns the property but ownership will transfer to Lane County in 90 days. He said grant funds are available from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. He said bricks can be purchased for \$500 and \$50. The bricks can be personalized with a loved one's name and will be included in the construction of the Memorial. He said a foundation will be established from the sale of the personalized bricks to preserve and maintain the Memorial.

In response to a question from Darrell Carman, Mr. Laing said individual five foot plaques will represent veterans from each war.

Mayor Brooker endorsed the Veterans' Memorial.

Mr. Laing is not requesting funds from the City but would like to get the Council's endorsement to move forward with the concept of the Veterans' Memorial.

In response to Darrell Carman expressing his concern about the Memorial being so close to the Suislaw Bank and parking lot, Mr. Laing said the five foot plaques will be placed on the east side of the bank building by the flag pole. He said this should provide a buffer between the Memorial and the bank building and parking area. Mr. Laing said this site was also chosen because the high volume of traffic should deter vandalism.

The consensus of the Council was to endorse Mr. Laing's Memorial so he can move forward with the project. Ric said from an inter-governmental standpoint, it's easier for the City to work with the County. Ric offered to provide Kristen Kelley's assistance to write the grant to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, which is the same process the City followed for the acquisition of the TSP ball fields.

Mayor Brooker said he would sign a letter of recommendation to Lane County and he thanked Mr. Laing for his time and effort thus far.

- (1) Appointment of new members to the Veneta Planning Commission  
Mayor Brooker said Len Goodwin, David Simonsen and Estelle Sweet submitted applications. He said after reviewing the applications, Mayor Brooker reappointed Len Goodwin who reapplied for his position and Estelle Sweet, who has worked with various volunteer groups in the area.

b. COUNCIL/COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Sharon Hobart-Hardin said the Parks Board had a great meeting on December 3, 2008. She said the Veneta Garden Club is proceeding well. She said they have been contacted by the Junction City Garden Club and the State Garden Club. She said the president of the State Garden Club will make a presentation at the next Veneta Garden Club meeting on Saturday, December 13, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Fern Ridge Community Library. She said Denise Hand has done an exceptional job moving forward with the Garden Club. She said the Parks Board is working on several projects with few Board members. She said some members are not attending meetings regularly. She said it's very important to have a working Board. Currently the Parks Board is looking at asking the Council to change the Bylaws to allow the Board to request a member to step down from their position if members miss three meetings. She said the Parks Board is also discussing adding new members to the Board which the Bylaws allow. She said these matters may come to the City Council in January, 2009.

Darrell Carman said he will not be able to attend the upcoming LCOG meeting on Thursday, December 11, 2008 at Eugene 4J School District Education Center. He said Mayor Williams of Cottage Grove will present a draft report of the Task Force on Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring at that meeting. He also said LCOG has moved into their new office at 859 Willamette St, Suite 500, Eugene, Oregon.

Ric informed the Council that City staff received the Revenue Restructuring Report and will place a copy of the report in the Councilors' boxes.

Marion Esty said the library renovation committee is meeting on Thursday, December 11, 2008.

#### 4. STAFF REPORTS

- a. FINANCE DIRECTOR.....JERRI MOORE  
(1) Identity Theft Policy

Jerri distributed the Identify Theft Prevention program. She said the resolution to adopt the program will be presented to the Council for approval at the January 12, 2009 meeting. She said federal legislation initiated the identity theft prevention program for organizations that offer or extend credit. She said we qualify as an entity by extending credit to residents via utility accounts and loans for various fees the City charges. She said this program also assists the City in being good stewards by protecting its residents' identities.

In response to a question from Marion Esty, Jerri said the Bolton Hill Road LID is one of the forms of credit the City extends to its residents.

- (2) Water Rate Increase

At the last Council meeting Brian Issa provided options for increasing the existing water rates. Jerri Moore said based on direction from the City Council, tonight staff is providing two options for Resolution 986. Jerri asked the Council to adopt one of the options. Staff is recommending Option 1 be adopted as Resolution 986.

Sharon Hobart-Hardin felt Option 1 captured exactly what the Council discussed at the last Council meeting. She said the reality is to encourage commercial businesses in our community to stay here.

In response to a comment from Darrell Carman, Brian said revenue from the residential accounts will basically subsidize revenue that we should be getting from commercial accounts. He said this is based on the premise that the percentage of revenue should equal the percentage of total consumption.

Mayor Brooker said there are significantly more residential accounts than commercial accounts. Therefore the commercial accounts may need some kind of a subsidy. He said if and when the number of commercial accounts increase we may change the policy but at this time it makes the most sense. He said it's unfortunate the City has to raise water rates but costs have continued to increase. He said this is the 5<sup>th</sup> water base rate increase since 1969. He felt the rate increase will assist future expansions and maintenance costs. He said Kyle Schauer has been diligent in keeping water plant costs down. He said labor costs are currently the biggest cost within the water system. He said with few public works employees it would be difficult to reduce those costs even more. He suggested Kyle speak on this subject at the next meeting.

Marion Esty agreed.

Ric said since the automatic meter reading program was implemented a couple of years ago the City has seen a significant savings on labor and vehicle costs and maintenance. He said once the new accounting software is up and running, staff will have a better understanding of the various usages and be able to collect data to see where the inefficiencies are. He said saving potable water for irrigation and water reclamation is a huge way to save and/or recoup water.

Brian said the City will continue to pay a higher price for water due to operational and maintenance costs on the City's multiple wells and treatment facilities.

(a) Public Comment

**Herb Vloedman, 25125 Luther Lane, Veneta, OR**

Mr. Vloedman is in favor of adjusting rates to cover costs. However, as a business owner with a commercial water account, he doesn't want to be subsidized. He wants to carry his own weight. He asked what the difference is between commercial and residential water accounts, how is the cost established for each and what determines those differences.

Brian said commercial establishments require a larger meter to accommodate a fire sprinkler system. He said these larger meters are more costly to install. He said commercial accounts will pay more per gallon because there are so few commercial accounts the cost is spread out over all the commercial accounts.

Ric said the amount of water the City is required to deliver to a resident is much less than the amount of water to a shopping center and all the businesses within that shopping center. He said the cost of the infrastructure is just a portion of the commercial account costs plus the ability to deliver 300 cubic feet of water per second to that shopping center is an additional cost. He said in a fire situation, the consumption amount isn't really a factor but the cost of providing that volume of water for fire prevention is expensive.

In response to a question from Herb Vloedman, Jerri said a resolution header was used only as a reference to distinguish the two options from one another. She said the word "subsidy" will not be included in the adopted resolution.

(b) **Resolution No. 986 - A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING WATER FEES AND RATES FOR USERS OF THE VENETA MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 975**

- (i) Option #1
- (ii) Option #2

**MOTION: Sharon Hobart-Hardin made a motion to approve Option 1 of Resolution No. 986. Thomas Cotter seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 5-0.**

Ric said staff is researching the possibility of lowering the wastewater base rate. He said an in-depth analysis of the Wastewater Master Plan is required. He said staff would like to work on this and get the water base rate increase to coincide with the wastewater decrease so we could support the dollar reduction and the water increase would offset one another.

Thomas Cotter expressed concern about changing a healthy account. He said in order to keep the account healthy it may require a lot of growth. He cautioned staff to keep an eye on the water account so things don't get out of sync.

Mayor Brooker said without doing an in-depth analysis staff felt a \$1.00 wastewater reduction would offset the water base rate increase. He said this will be for the next Council to review at a January 2009 meeting.

Brian said currently the City offers a \$2.00 senior citizen discount on the water base rate but not on the wastewater base rate. He said staff is proposing a flat 25% low income discount on both accounts. He said this is not reflected in Resolution 986. He said if the Council is interested in seeing a low income discount on water, staff could provide a draft resolution reflecting the discount.

Sharon Hobart-Hardin agreed. In response to a question from Sharon Hobart-Hardin, Jerri said staff has seen a small increase in shut offs and over due water accounts. She said generally speaking, collections are good.

After discussing the matter in length, it was the consensus of the Council that providing a senior and low income discount on both water and wastewater accounts should be discussed further.

Jerri said the financial software RFP closed on Friday, December 5, 2008. She said four proposals were received.

In response to a question from Mayor Brooker, Jerri said the financial software sub-committee meeting has been tentatively schedule for December 17.

Jerri said the June 30, 2008 audit report is near completion. She said the Council will receive a copy of the MDA once she has reviewed it. She said the audit report will be submitted within the timeline.

- b. CITY RECORDER .....SHERYL HACKETT  
(1) **Ordinance No. 485 - AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING CITY PARK RULES AND REPEALING ORDINANCE 443 AND SECTION 12 OF ORDINANCE 448. Second reading by title only and for final enactment.**

**MOTION: Thomas Cotter made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 485 for the second reading and final enactment. Sharon Hobart Hardin seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 5-0.**

Ordinance No. 485 was read into the record by title only and for final enactment.

- c. COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR ..... BRIAN ISSA  
(1) Update on Amendments to Ordinance 461 and 462  
Brian said the Council approved staff's recommended changes to Ordinance 461 and 462. He said another public comment session was held because the changes were significant. He said Ordinance 461 and 462 will be presented to the Council for final approval when the public comment period has expired.
- d. CITY ADMINISTRATOR.....RIC INGHAM  
(1) CDBG Project Summary  
Ric suggested discussing the CDBG project summary at the Veneta Urban Renewal Agency meeting immediately following the City Council meeting. The Council agreed.

**5. OTHER**

Ric said staff worked with LCOG and Lane County to get the City's proposed projects on the Congressional Economic Stimulus list. City staff provided the Council with the project list which was submitted today to Senator Wyden and Congressman DeFazio. He said immediate job creation projects and projects that could be completed in the 2009 construction season received priority status on the project list. He said public works projects were also a top priority. He said only projects with completed preliminary designs and engineering were on the City's project list. Ric reviewed the City's project list in priority order. He said the total cost to complete the entire project list is approximately 7.7 million dollars. He said based on the calculations provided by the federal government the projects listed would create about 75 construction jobs. Ric said he spoke with Congressman DeFazio's staff and Senator Wyden's staff and they indicated the City's project list will be included in their final recommendation they will take to the Governor's office tomorrow, December 9, 2008 to be included in a state wide list. Ric said the number one project on the list should be the Highway 126 project; but unfortunately, too much preliminary work is needed on this project before it could be placed on the list for 2009.

In response to a question from Sharon Hobart-Hardin, if there is a second round of the stimulus funding, is there anyway we could speed up the Highway 126 project in order to include it in the second round. Ric said he will provide the Council with a copy of the letter from Senator Prozanski and Representative Hovey which was sent to the OTC chair to try to get the Highway 126 project on the federal earmark list. He said Brian has been in contact with TGM representatives who are interested in conducting a corridor study for that section of Highway 126. He said this would give us the match needed to make the earmark portion work.

Staff would like to plan a good bye open house some time in January for Mayor Brooker and Thomas Cotter. Ric said because there is also a vacancy on the City Council, staff would like Council direction to advertise the vacant Council seat immediately or wait under after the New Year. Ric said he would also like to conduct a goal setting session in January. He suggested Saturday, January 24.

Mayor Brooker and Sharon Hobart-Hardin agreed staff should advertise now for the vacant Council position.

It was the consensus of the Council to conduct a goal setting session on January 24, 2009. Ric said he will get additional goal setting information to the Council prior to this meeting.

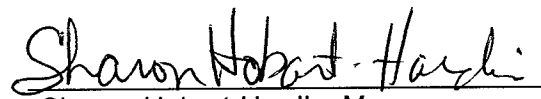
Sharon Hobart-Hardin would like to include a brief orientation at the goal setting session.

Thomas Cotter thanked everyone for their participation in the light parade. He also wanted to alert City staff and the public works department that some residents in the area of the Hunter and Huston Roads intersection have expressed concerns about the traffic signage at that intersection. They suggested possibly placing traffic signage on both sides of each roadway warning of the intersection. He said there was an accident there recently. He asked public works to look into this even though Huston is a County road.

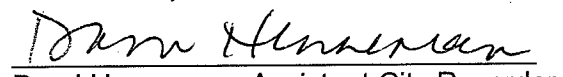
Mayor Brooker thanked the City Council and staff for the opportunity to work with such dedicated people. He said he has been truly blessed to serve the City as Mayor for the past 10 years and wishes the City future success.

6. **ADJOURN**

Mayor Brooker adjourned the City Council at 8:15 p.m.

  
Sharon Hobart-Hardin, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Darci Henneman, Assistant City Recorder  
(minutes prepared by Dhenneman)